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An Invitation to the Wake

James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* is, in its own brave words, a "loudburst of poesy", a table bounteously laden with "once current puns, quashed quotatoes, messes of mottage" "of every desception". It is a book—whether or not it is a novel—highly characteristic of the age that produced Hiroshima: Joyce's personal "abnihilisation of the etym". Like his character Shem the Penman he has "traduced into jinglish janglage" an "idioglossary" full of "intomologies" which, though or because it keeps the reader on "punns and reedles", is the primary source of the rich comedy at Finnegan's "funferall". This is a book full of "feed, hop and jollity" if ever there was one. It cannot be dismissed as Joyce's "airish pleasantry"; it is, rather, "a bolderdash for lubberty of speech". Even those who neither understand nor enjoy this rare flight into time-space will no doubt agree that "nobirdy aviar soar any wing to eagle it".

Its obscure "slanguage", however, is not the only reason why the *Wake*, on a first reading, may seem to be a quarter of a million words of mere "nomanclatter" and "illiteratise porthery." The reader may get indigestion not only from the "stew of the evening, booksyful stew" of "Lewd's carol" but from, among other dishes offered, the philosophy of history of "Mr. John Baptister Vickar", which is to the *Wake* the formative influence that its Homeric pattern was to *Ulysses*—and less productive of clear form. The stream of unconsciousness which is the *Wake* moves "in vicous cicles yet remews the same." Like the opening and closing sentence of the *Wake* and its narrative technique in general, "the Vico road goes round and round to meet where terms begin". During a first reading, one may have to ask with one of the characters in the book, "Where are we at all? and whenabouts in the name of space?" For such story as there is in this "meandertale" saga seems to have been narrated "in the weirdest of all pensible ways". Was Joyce trying, the reader accustomed to taking his fiction straight may ask, to "psing a psalm of psexpeans, apocryphal of rhyme"? Is the book what Joyce called Shem's *Ulysses*, "an epical forged cheque on the public for his own private profit"? Or is it just so much "condensed bilk"?

But *Finnegan's Wake* cannot be so easily dismissed. What other work of fiction derives from a longer, more impressive, roll of for-e-bears? Joyce is here indebted, among philosophers, to "Harrystotalies", "Nola Bruno", "Bussup Bulkeley", "Hume, sweet hume", "Micholas de Cusack", and Vico, already mentioned; among dramatists, to "Sophoclose", "Shakhisbeard", and—"lapse not leashed" —"Oscen wild". Poets and poetry mentioned and drawn upon include "lordbeeron", "the divine comic Denti Alligator", "Gouty", and "Makefearsome's Ocean". Writers of prose include "curdinal numen", the Dean who spun another "tale of a tublin" and "Gollovar's Troubles", "stirm" of "treestirm shindy", and "mark twang", whose "Hurdlebury Fenn" was appropriate food for the author of *Finnegan's Wake*. Men of science whose work is both mentioned and apparently understood by Joyce are "Winestain", the anthropologist "Levi-Brullo", and "Charley you're my darwing". Joyce knew not only "the origin of spices" but also "the sowiveall of the prettiest".

For the task he assigned himself—the recording of the stream not of consciousness but of unconsciousness—Joyce no doubt had to create a new medium. But yet for most readers the language of the *Wake* will likely remain a high hurdle. On each reading, however, the book takes on more meaning. As Polonius says of Hamlet, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in it." The *Wake* is a "chaosmos," not utterly nonsensical but rather "so analytical plausible". We need not go so far as some of Joyce's critics, who claim that this new language carries a maximum of meaning and is thus an improvement over ordinary language. We can admit that it is artfully, brilliantly, entertainingly contrived and still question whether such language will communicate the large and important meanings of the *Wake* to very many people.

We will have to leave to later generations the question whether the Joyce of *Finnegan's Wake*, "excruciated, in honour bound" to his "sanscreed", will suffer death on the cross of his "own cruel-fiction". Meanwhile, we can, if we wish, take Shaun's advice and "Shun the Punman". Or we may say with a character in the opening chapter of the *Wake*, "What a mnice old mness it all makes".

(*Pilliam Weery is Andsosheate Prefossil of Winglash at the Unitexity averse us.*)

(An abstract of William Peery's "Shakhisbeard at Finnegan's Wake", which has appeared in full in the University of Texas *Studies in English* (XXX, 243-257), is printed in No. 2 of Vol. I of the Shakespeare Newsletter, April, 1951.)

The Virginia-No. Carolina CEA will meet Nov. 17 at the University of Richmond. Frederick Pottle will be the afternoon speaker.

NEXT ANNUAL CEA MEETING
December 27, 1951
Detroit, Michigan

The Morning After

We may consider the Fitzgerald Revival to have begun its decline in the second week of May 1951, when the Mizener biography dropped to number 13 on the N.Y. **Times** best-seller list, when the Schulberg **roman a clef** continued a careful but steady drop on the same scale, when the **Times Book Review** contained no other mention or advertisement of Fitzgerald, when the Ritz itself was finally closed, and when Robert Hillyer's **New Yorker** couplets invoked the hex number "1929" to stem the "knock-kneed Charleston" and other necrophilisms of the Revival. Fitzgerald said that the Jazz Age began in the spring of 1919 and ran for six years; the Revival began in 1945 with Edmund Wilson's memorial **Crack-Up** and may as well end appropriately in another spring six years later. We have other heroes to hallow.

What have we learned recently (1) about Fitzgerald, (2) about his work, and (3) about ourselves? (1) From Mizener and Schulberg, a great deal of case-history about a writer whose vision rarely focussed on anything other than himself and his reputation. (2) From Mizener, the dubious information that Fitzgerald's "reputation as a serious novelist is secure" and that **Tender Is the Night** is his "finest and most serious novel"; from Schulberg, that Fitzgerald had a memory and a wit that were unusually vivid. (3) From Mizener and Schulberg, the fact that most of us find neurosis fascinating and unfathomable.

This is not much, is it? But the two books will never lack for readers. Mizener's biography is mostly objective, and it manages to tell a sad story without being sad or condescending. (It is a tribute to Fitzgerald's daughter, by the way, how far she has allowed us to come from the traditional life-and-letters biography.) Yet Mizener somehow keeps his subject well this side of paradise. Where is the charm and the wit that form, after all, the attractive obverse of Fitzgerald's image? One cannot even see the fabled good looks; in fact only on the dust-jacket of **The Last Tycoon** can this generation find the handsomeness obscured by currently printed photographs. Much more important, Mizener never really demonstrates to us why anyone should devote so much time to a "spoiled priest." Perhaps the demonstration is properly found not in biography, but in Fitzgerald's own novels.

It is my opinion that **Gatsby** and **The Beautiful and Damned** are the best of these novels—perhaps the only pages in the canon worth reading. And it is the tone of unrelenting humiliation of the latter book that informs Schulberg's **Disenchanted**, which compresses twenty-five years of Fitzgerald's life into one final week. Manley Halliday is not Fitzgerald exactly —since this is a good novel—but he is more truly the spirit of F. Scott Fitzgerald than Amory Blaine, Jay Gatsby, Nick Carraway, or Dick Diver. He is nearest to the Anthony Patch of **The Beautiful and Damned**, who after prodigious physical, mental, and psychical torture, babbles insanely at the end, "I showed them." For throughout the alcoholic nightmare of Halliday's decline is the incredible bravado, the confidence in a self so often imagined as to be real, that gives Fitzgerald's work its tenuous strength. Fitzgerald, Patch, and Halliday all wanted diamonds as big as the Ritz, but the cruel joke is that, despite all the self-depreciation and obvious failure, they secretly thought they had really acquired the diamonds.

Schulberg's novel is wonderful—clear, fast, and careful, satiric yet compassionate, unsparing yet basically unsensational. I venture to say that it is as good as most of Fitzgerald's fiction, that the subject would have envied it. It leaves Mizener somehow painstakingly transcribing transcripts of college grades while Schulberg is off into the real kaleidoscope, or change of venue, of Scott and Zelda. No one has ever written a better literary novel.

If only we could dissociate it from F. Scott Fitzgerald's work! Let us forget our new knowledge of his personality and proceed to the proper business of readers and critics—to read his short stories and novels and to criticize them. I say this as a chastened instructor who recently gave his class Fitzgerald before *Gatsby*. Last night I read a student's report on the novel. She had been disappointed. "I expected something fabulous and out of this world, I guess," she wrote, "It's all very hard to explain." It is, indeed—as things always are on the morning after the Revival Meeting.

FREDERICK L. GWYNN
Pennsylvania State College

(*The Spring 1951 issue of "The Pacific Spectator" contains Frederick L. Gwynn's "Tennyson at Leyte Gulf." This is the story of how a playful radio communicator added a phrase from the "Charge of the Light Brigade" to a message and thus changed the whole course of the Battle for Leyte Gulf. It is told by Admiral Halsey's former aide.*)

With Albert Madeira in charge, the CEA Bureau of Appointments will again provide, at the Detroit meetings, facilities for interviews between registrants and prospective employers, to whom the data on candidates will be available. While registrants in this non-profit Bureau are limited to CEA members, any prospective employer is invited to use its services. The Bureau fee for a twelve-month registration period is three dollars. There are no other charges. Registration *does not* guarantee placement.

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Comments — *Sweet and Sour*

Two things have concerned me since I first began to teach. One is the low status of the teaching of composition. I have commented acidly in an earlier issue of THE CRITIC on its subprofessional standing — even if you wished to make a career of teaching composition, it is hard to do so. If you do well at it, your reward consists in being promoted away from it into the fields of literature; to be really concerned about it seems unworthy of the truly scholarly mind. The other is the multiplied evil of the amateur approach. Since composition is not a fit arena in which to make a career, we give it only the left hand.

Certainly, the way most of us do it, anyone can teach composition. Yet it was for centuries a dignified discipline which engaged the whole hearts and minds of distinguished teachers: to lead the young to the mastery of the written form of a civilized tongue, and through that mastery to love and appreciation of the culture embodied in it.

Today, of all the blue-plates offered in the academic cafeteria, ours is the only one universally required. We have in our hands, for a whole year, almost every student in almost every college in the land. It is a grave responsibility, and one we should make ourselves worthy of. I submit that we shall never have professional status in the eyes of our colleagues as we do this important work until we can come ourselves to see the measure of its importance, and set ourselves humbly and diligently and eruditely to learn the necessities of the job and submit to them.

DONALD J. LLOYD
Wayne University

(Donald Lloyd has been receiving comments of agreement on his "Another Pull at the Bell Rope" (September, 1950, CRITIC). Carl Dykema points out that Lloyd's method demands better teachers than we have — to which the answer comes: "Of course." Professor Lloyd has several lately produced papers of interest to English teachers. Two of these — one in the February issue of *Educational Screen* and one that is appearing in *Etc., A Review of General Semantics*—deal with the use of the opaque projector in composition classes, a technique first described in THE CRITIC (October, 1948). In the February *College Composition and Communication*, in an article entitled, "Darkness is King—a Reply to Professor Knickerbocker," he offers serious criticism of professors of English who "write ignorantly on the very subject-matter of linguistics."

I have always felt that journalism, public relations, and English-teaching were so closely related that experience in one was of value in all. I feel that a closer liaison between business, industry, and public relations on the one hand and the English-teaching profession on the other would redound greatly to the benefit of both. As you doubtless know, communication is a burning issue in the business world today. Perhaps you have seen the series of articles that Fortune magazine has been running recently.

I enjoyed reading your address, "Higher Education for Citizenship." I was particularly glad that you pointed out that the contradiction between quantity and quality was more apparent than real. (I paraphrase you very loosely.) After all, the bigger the crop sown, the more good ears.

I sometimes feel that as a nation we suffer from an inferiority complex; we look too much toward Europe and feel unduly apologetic of our own tremendous achievements. I feel that this is especially true in the academic field. Europe has as much to learn from us as we from her; and I often feel that the attitudes she needs to learn from us are rather more important from a human point of view than those we might acquire from her. I say this despite the facts that my stronger interest is in British literature and that British writers and scholars achieve a felicity of style, a grace and deftness of touch, that we might do well to emulate.

I thought that the report of the committee on the revision of the Ph. D. program pointed out many necessary reforms. I hope that they will be made. Too often educators have a habit of nodding their head in sagacious agreement to all criticisms and suggested reforms while in conclave and then returning to their own institutions and requiring their students to conform to the same old lockstep. (Teachers are not the only ones who do this, I might add!)

I was especially interested to see mention made of Professors Crouch and Zetler's proposal that the thesis requirement be thrown out and practice teaching be substituted, because I know and like both of these gentleman. I think, however, that perhaps they place undue emphasis on teaching as the only possible outcome of graduate study in English.

How about the people who take advanced work in English for the good it will do them in writing trades other than teaching, or just for the love of letters? Is graduate study in English to be conceived of as only a self-perpetuating mill for training teachers to train teachers to train teachers, **ad infinitum, ad nauseum?** This approach is responsible for many of the evils that beset the graduate program in my humble opinion, such as the footnote folly, the preoccupation with linguistic mechanics and bibliographical apparatus. (How apt that barbarism, "apparatus"!)

LIONEL CONRATH
Pittsburgh, Pa.

George J. Spears has been appointed to the faculty of Russell Sage College, as director of the Albany Evening Division and Associate Professor of English.

Mr. Spears had been with the University of Buffalo since 1942. He had served as coordinator and educational counsellor at Millard Fillmore College.

Introduction to Poetry
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Epistles from and to the Grammarians

In his rejoinder to Mr. McCue's criticism of his *English Grammar*, Mr. Allen upbraids his critic for the failure to use a comma after *observation* in the following sentence: "This book begins with the observation that language, 'while interesting in itself, is a means to an end, etc. . . '". Mr. Allen says, "It is hardly necessary to point out that the *that* clause is a noun clause and gives the substance of the observation. Even grammar school usage requires a comma here to distinguish a noun from an adjective, or descriptive and identifying clause." (The omission of the necessary comma after *identifying* may be noted in passing.)

Authorities, however, are in general agreement that the rule for the restrictive appositive is the same as that for the restrictive modifier: no commas are used. Some college handbooks state the rule in unequivocal terms but do not include examples of the restrictive noun clause appositive. Such an example is given, however, in *Writing and Thinking :A Handbook of Composition and Revision* (Revised Edition, 1941) by Norman Foerster and J. M. Steadman, Jr. Among other excellent illustrations of restrictive appositives we find this one: "The idea *that you are qualified for this position* is unwarranted." On the high-school level a good treatment of the subject is found in the well-known *Sentence and Theme* (Third Edition) by C. H. Ward. Mr. Ward offers numerous illustrations of the noun clause appositive without commas.

Mr. McCue's use of a comma in the sentence quoted would have violated the accepted rules for the punctuation of restrictive and non-restrictive sentence elements, which have a sound logical basis.

JULIA NORTON McCORKLE
University of Southern California

Aside from the fact that Mr. McCue's irony totally evades Mr. Allen's comprehension, Mr. Allen's prescriptive strictures are themselves faulty.

(a). The noun clause in McCue's opening sentence is, of course, in apposition with *observation*. Since *observation* is preceded by the definite article, the appositive is restrictive (cp. "The Brook Kerith", or constructions beginning "the fact that"); hence no comma is needed—in fact, a comma would be wrong, or at least misleading.

(b).The participle *doing* in McCue's second sentence is obviously intended to modify not *author*, but the complement *iconoclast*. His intent is clear; it is Mr. Allen who wishes to make the participle modify "the wrong noun."

For the second set of observations—

(a) Nouns have not and never have had *person* in any Indo-European language. Time enough to introduce such distinctions when they become necessary, as, e.g., in studying American Indian languages where they are meaningful.

(b) Mr. Allen totally misses the point that McCue is asking for some consideration for the spoken language, which (Mr. A. and his 18th century "contemporaries" to the contrary notwithstanding) is what makes grammar. Allen's treatment of the English plural is purely orthographic; my introductory class in English linguistics readily pointed out its fallacies.

(c) Mr. A's final statement about "repairing the damage" shows clearly enough that McCue is right about classing him with the 18th century authoritarians. If he can read with an open mind such books as Bryant's *Functional English Grammar*, Jespersen's *Philosophy of Grammar* or Hall's *Leave Your Language Alone!*, Mr. Allen should be tempted to call in his book and write a 20th century grammar.

W. NELSON FRANCIS
Franklin and Marshall College

Author's Note—There is a kind of half-knowledge of linguistics getting around recently among English scholars—as evidenced by Donand J. Lloyd's lead article in the September CRITIC, and by certain comments in Pollock's "The English Language in American Education" in the February, 1951 PMLA. In both articles there is talk about the scientific analysis of English structure, but in both there are a good many things said which don't accord with any very far-reaching understanding of what that analysis consists of.

Consequently, though I am by no means ready to undertake a full-scale analysis of how English language teaching could be improved, I feel it might not be a bad idea if Hall's book about linguistics were once again called to the attention of the members of the association.

Some time last year a brief but favorable review of Robert A. Hall's book "Leave Your Language Alone" appeared in the CRITIC. Since then there has been no mention of it here. It is a provocative, even controversial, book—especially to teachers of English. The issues it raises are a good deal more fundamental to the teaching of English than all the books Cleanth Brooks and most of the other New Critics have written. The matter of what particular approach we shall use in teaching literature is important enough. But the matter of whether we shall continue to teach students nonsense about the structure of English, or whether we shall wake up to the fact that the language is far from being what the handbooks make it out to be, seems to me basic to any further discussion of teaching methods on any level.

Hall's book does not contain many ideas that have not been available for twenty years or so to anyone who was interested enough to look around him and find out what was going on in the field of linguistic science. But most of the books one would have had to read were technical and seemingly distant from the special business which it is the good fortune of English teachers to beat their heads against brick walls about. But, now there is this book, a non-technical, easily readable, brief and pointed exposition of the implications of scientific linguistics for the layman, the teacher, and the world they have to deal with through language. It is in every way an important and brilliant piece of work. Yet so far as I can discover, it has been practically ignored by members of this association, to say nothing of its being ignored by teachers on the prep and elementary school levels—the levels where the damage is really done. I did not expect the book to gain universal approval. I thought it might set off some small sort of storm about what ought to be taught in the way of English grammar. But I never expected it would be ignored.

The greatest improvement that can be made in the teaching of English is not in the direction of literary methodology. There we can use the intensive method of the New Critics, or the older extensive reading method with parallel pre-literary analysis, and either way we can be fairly successful.

The great improvement to be made is in the manner in which we teach the language—and it is my belief that the linguists alone are able to point the way. No survey of the book that I might give in this limited space can begin to do justice to the scope and significance of its implications. It simply has to be read and discussed.

I submit that teachers of English, and teachers of language in general, have maintained for long enough their hands-off policy regarding the scientific approach to language found in linguistics. It is time for more than mere tolerance of the linguists. It is time to start trying to understand what they have to say, and Hall's book will give its readers a long head start in such an undertaking.

ROBERT P. STOCKWELL
University of Virginia

Donald Lloyd's "Snobs, Slobs, and the English Language" has appeared in the summer 1951 issue of *The American Scholar*. In the same issue, Jacques Barzun offers "the Retort Circumstantial." Lloyd's article rose out of a long correspondence between him and Prof. Barzun occasioned by some remarks the latter had made on linguists and linguistics in *The Nation* for October 15, 1949. It was Prof. Barzun himself who recommended the article to *The American Scholar;* and it was the editor of that publication, Mr. Haydn, who helped the author reduce the article from an original 10,000 words of "massed evidence" to 3,500. Lloyd writes: "I can't express my admiration for Jacques Barzun for his good offices in pressing this paper into publication."

By special arrangement with Messrs. Haydn, Lloyd, and Barzun, THE CEA CRITIC, distributes both "Snobs, Slobs and the English Language", and "The Retort Circumstantial", as a supplement to the present issue.

Prof. Lloyd is serving on the Michigan CEA Committee.

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I'VE BEEN READING

J. GORDON EAKER, Literary Editor
217 Audley Street, South Orange, N.J.

Last fall I joined the faculty of Roosevelt College of Chicago to teach Business Reports, a course open to students of junior, senior, or graduate standing.

During the first meeting of the first Reports class, I became aware of one young man who seemed to understand that a reports course should concern itself with locating, selecting, evaluating, organizing and communicating facts, and not with word-swapping to "improve writing." Inquiry brought to light that the student's freshman composition text had been Hayakawa's *Language in Action*; and he was, in his spare time, now devouring the newer *Language in Thought and Action*. In my class of the next hour, two more students were with me from my opening remarks. A thought struck me: "Did your freshman composition teachers use Hayakawa's book as a text?"—"Yes! but how did you know?"

Since then it has been a game with me. I can spot them—in any class, be it Reports or Management. Even those who are poor students are poor in a different—a saner—sort of way. They are more cooperative with the instruction, with the group, and with reality.

MARY DALE BUCKNER
Roosevelt College

TAKE CARE OF MY LITTLE GIRL, by Peggy Goodin (Dutton, $2.50. Decorations by Marjorie Bauernschmidt)—This is a cleverly worded little satire on the sorority system.

Exciting reading for Shakespeare classes

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by Amanda M. Ellis

Professor of English Literature
Colorado College

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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, Hardin Craig, general editor. (Oxford University Press, 697 pp., $8.00)

"Old and Middle English Literature from the Beginnings to 1485," by George K. Anderson.

"The Literature of the English Renaissance 1485-1660," by Hardin Craig.

"The Literature of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century 1660-1798," by Louis I. Bredvold.

"The Literature of the Nineteenth and the Early Twentieth Centuries 1798 to the First World War," by Joseph Warren Beach.

One could hardly find a more valuable and readable book for teachers and students of English literature than this literary history by four of America's well known scholars, each of whom is experienced in the writing of books and reflects in himself the peculiar virtues of his period of specialization. The pages are large enough and the print just small enough to contain in about 150 pages for each period an amazing amount of new scholarship and clear information. One does not really appreciate our rich heritage of English literature until one sees it brought masterfully together into short compass. And no matter how much one may think one knows already, one is sure to find something helpful here.

The proportioning of space, to be sure, is hardly commensurate with the attendance at the various study groups of the Modern Language Association, but historical or literary value is not measured by popularity. A sound compendium on medieval romance, tale, and religious literature is more valuable than a dissertation on twentieth-century literature, if only because it is more rare. But one may wish that more than two or three pages could be given to figures like Carlyle and Ruskin. In general, however, wherever one opens this volume, one is grateful for what is given, whether on Chaucer, Shakespeare, Bacon, Dryden, Swift, Wordsworth, Meredith, Joyce, or on any minor figure.

Worth mentioning are Professor Anderson's rich knowledge of the medieval romances and church literature, Professor Craig's fine philosophy of the Renaissance and Shakespeare, Professor Bredvold's brilliant handling of the neo-classical giants as well as the philosophy of sensibility, and Professor Beach's poise in handling modern science, social thought, poetic idiom, and the contribution of the new criticism.

To learn about a period — surely it is now established — one must sit at the feet of a master who has soaked himself in that period. It is no wonder if the teacher reflects in his outlook, style, and very personality the strengths and virtues and even the confusions and weaknesses of the ages that he has most studied. Yet all four of these men constantly bring their thought to bear on our present-day need for faith and direction in the life of the spirit.

Without our literary heritage we would be poor, indeed, as we face the baffling problems of our atomic age. But with the great thoughts of the noble dead to guide us, how can we fail? This book gives me new courage and devotion to my task. Did I not find my name in the forty-page select bibliography?

SMOKE by Ivan S. Turgenev, translated by Natalie Duddington, No. 988 in Everyman's Library (Dutton, 242 pp.)—This addition to the Everyman Library is especially timely because of Turgenev's analysis of the Russian character. The theme is that the Russians—at least in 1867—talked a great deal but stayed the same underneath. Litvinov, the hero, reflects: "All is vapour and smoke; all seems to change continually, . . . but at bottom all is the same; everything hurries, hastens somewhere—and everything disappears without a trace, attaining nothing . . . He recalled much that happened with clamour and commotion before his eyes of late years . . . 'Smoke.' he whispered, 'smoke.'"

THE BASIC BIBLE, Containing the Old and New Testament in Basic English (In a Vocabulary of 1000 Words; Dutton, 910 pp. $4.50)—Chesterton maintained that simplicity is more advanced than complexity. Passages in the old Bible versions which are complicated in phrasing or rely upon words which have changed in meaning through the centuries in many instances acquire new force in this version. To the 850 words in Basic English, fifty special Bible words were added and a hundred for the reading of verse in this translation by two committees of scholars under the direction of Professor S. H. Hooke and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press. Professor I. A. Richards rendered support from this country. The book can be both a revelation to the layman and a splendid introduction for children.

THE TREASURE OF NAPLES, by Giuseppe Marotta (Dutton, $3)—These humorous, realistic sketches reveal Neapolitan life in all its variety and whimsicality. We learn delicately how love first comes to young girls, how death is born by bereaved relatives, how wives deceive their good-natured husbands, how quarrels are fought and lotteries lost. The characters are warm, lovable, and convincing, reflecting the mildness of their skies. Each story has enough plot and Italian artistry to leave a taste for more.

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And gladly wolde he lerne — and gladly teche

Nowadays, I think, a graduate student just loosed upon his first teaching tends to leap in with enthusiasms that are doomed to disenchantment. On the other hand, or perhaps as a result, the aspiring Ph.D. candidate is likely to be increasingly tempted to join the chase after scholarly glory that rushes past him in all directions. In both instances, I think that the CEA may have a steadying influence.

Particularly through THE CRITIC, of course, it testifies to the belief of a number of people that teaching, too, has its merits and its scattered delights; and it suggests to the young teacher that problems which he is facing with dismay for the first time have dismayed experienced teachers for years—and, more important, that there are teachers still dismayed because they are still concerned with teaching.

On the other hand, it seems that the student-teacher has the advantage of youth over his elders. I have found that undergraduates come to us perhaps more freely with personal problems and with questions that they would be embarrassed or afraid to put before those more experienced or simply a good deal older than they.

And I found two things in reflecting upon some of these questions. They may have been put to test my inexperience or to take advantage of the absence of age barrier or out of (too often misplaced) confidence. But they often concerned fundamental questions which are no longer asked on the graduate level — not because there they have been definitively answered, but because too many of those engaged in the giving and taking of graduate work have forgotten to consider them important.

That is perhaps why the student-teacher, more than the graduate professor, is forced to re-examine not only methods of teaching or the aims of scholarship, but both in relation to each other, each in terms of the other: because both need daily to be reconciled and actively meaningful within himself. And so I think that the student-teacher, in his earnest confusion, may be instrumental in keeping before the CEA membership questions which concern teacher, student, and scholar alike because they touch upon the central issues of the study of literature.

One of these issues, surely, is that the object of scholarship and teaching alike should be to *enlighten*. That is why I agree with those who recommend, instead of a Ph.D. thesis, a series of critical essays on each of the major figures in English literature — essays which will reveal the candidate's understanding, his judgement, his imagination. For a Ph.D. candidate in our time seems by definition to be a seeker after a research topic so minute and insignificant that even the most indiscriminating antiquarians among his predecessors has failed to discover it. The result is that he has never asked himself what *Hamlet* is really about until he is told to teach it to a group of freshmen who have never seen a play on the legitimate stage, and who think that Shakespeare must have lived a long time ago — in the Middle Ages, or at least in the nineteenth century.

Now I happen to consider a provincial illusion the assumption that one can pigeonhole ideas arbitrarily within national boundaries. And I feel that regional studies, for example, on any level are not the only way to give literature meaning in terms of the student's life.

In fact, I think that a graduate student who has not read Dante and Montaigne and Cervantes and has barely heard of Goethe has no business with either Charles Fletcher Lummis or Thomas Killigrew, however great their merits. Nothing, in any realm of knowledge, is irrelevant to the study of literature; but if the study of literature is not itself to become irrelevant, then, in an age and a country where graduate students can be as ignorant as so many of us are, I think it is time that we turned to essentials.

And in my own short teaching experience, I have repeatedly found that that is precisely what my freshmen demand. When, interestingly enough, for the first time the absence of G.I. students had become definitely noticeable — questions challenging the function of art were numerous and urgent. Again and again, in the compulsory one-quarter freshman course which serves as an introduction to literature by *genres*, a student would groan at the intricacies of a metaphysical conceit or admit his complete indifference to the crux of *Antigone*. And I shall long remember the moment when we had quite finished our four-week gallop through seven centuries of English verse and one of my best students, honestly troubled and diffident, asked if I could please tell him what, after all, *was* the good of poetry.

For several seconds, I felt distinctly tired of being on the defensive about literature. But then it struck me that if my attempts to answer his question throughout the last four weeks had failed, at least they had served to awaken in him the need to ask it now; and that, I decided, was probably more important than whether or not he confused Herrick with Herbert.

Besides, if literature is important at all, then questions that honestly challenge its importance should always be taken seriously. So much so that I think we ought seriously to ask on the graduate level the question, Which, among the so-called masterpieces of our heritage can stand the test of a fair and intelligent challenge of their validity—not for the sake of our freshmen only, but for us as graduate students, as scholars, as men, and *therefore* as teachers?

This happens to be precisely the purpose of a seminar in which I was recently enrolled, which set out to dethrone one of the monumental figures of world literature, Goethe, and, now that the deluge of bicentennial publications has subsided, to see what the Olympian is like when set among men. We found that not all have been prepared to worship him: Ortega y Gasset, Karl Jaspers, Santayana; and that those who regard him as a vital force in their ethical or creative existence do not by any means see him the same way: Nietzsche, Gide, Spengler, Valéry.

Yet we found that by redefining Goethe as we see him in the light of his image in the writings of some of our major contemporaries, our own understanding of him was enriched; and that the more of what we had come to revere unquestioningly was challenged, the more surely we possessed what we managed to defend.

This, I think, is fruitful scholarship because it is creative and alive. Except on such premises as these, I now see little meaning in graduate study, and correspondingly less in teaching. But, except by way of provoking discussion on this complex of problems which concern me deeply, I do not mean to be dogmatic. As a student-teacher member of CEA, I hope for enlightenment by way of THE CRITIC.

EVA SCHLIFER
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But I Will Defend to the Death . . ?

I read Arthur J. Monk's digest of the discussion of academic freedom (CRITIC for February 1951) with the usual complacency, more or less agreeing with the conclusions he reported, particularly with the view that a faculty alone should judge the fitness of its members to teach. But after further reflection, I was reminded of that description of a liberal as one who is so busy making sure that everyone else has freedom to utter opinions that he has no time to formulate any of his own.

Mr. Monk reports Prof. McGee as observing, "Perhaps the best procedure is not to tell the student anything and therefore be sure of no authoritarian indoctrination." This horror of telling anybody anything is characteristic. But when it accompanies admiration for the Marxist whom we must respect for his "ability to think things through and to harmonize thought and action," it is dangerous. For if the liberals are so afraid of prejudice that they treat all positive ideas with indifference while praising the ability of the dedicated Marxist to enthrall his very soul, how are their students ever to distinguish between falsehood skillfully disguised as truth and the truth itself?

I quote again: "The traditional answer has been to say *yes* and to allow our young people to be exposed also to the sincere ideas of other members of the faculty." To which I say "Amen," provided the other members of the faculty *have* sincere ideas. And by that I mean more than a mushy-headed tolerance for anything and everything.

A teacher who does not believe that some ideas are intrinsically evil, and who cannot show that they are, without resort to prejudice, is hardly a fit adversary for the skillful Marxist. *He* has no fear of "authoritarian indoctrination"; *He* does not suspend judgment "until all the facts are in." *He* will exploit the vacillation and confusion bred of a tolerance that has destroyed our faith in the truth of positive ideas.

I often wonder what would happen if a sincere and harmonized fascist started to perpetrate his views in the classroom, defending, for example, Hitler's mass murders. He would be rejected with horror and revulsion. But a communist defending, more cleverly to be sure, the mass murders of Stalin would be tolerated by the same liberals who regard fascism as an insufferable evil. Put this way, it would seem that proper presentation covers a multitude of sins.

Prof. McGee, as reported by Mr. Monk, apparently believes that the student becomes the ideal "free" citizen worthy of the ballot if he is never exposed to any intellectual authority. I would go a long way with him in efforts at stimulating the naturally lazy minds of students, but at the end of the road a decision must be made. Unless communism is shown up for what it is, a blight on whatever civilization we possess, we have failed our students, our country and indeed civilization itself.

True liberals should be more interested in defending our cultural heritage than in protecting the right of communists to destroy it. Academic freedom by all means, even tolerance for the vermin who would corrupt and enslave us, but above all we must practice a renewed devotion to the positive ideals which may yet prevent the twilight of liberalism and the eventual collapse of freedom everywhere.

EDWIN A. HANSEN
Harvard University

"If I had ever dreamed Truman would be elected, I would never have voted for him."

This gem of logic, uttered by a man whose loyalty to a party has survived his rejection of its ideals, is characteristic of many people. Ostensibly hating certain ideologies, they nevertheless make them possible of realization.

This seems to be the failure in logic in Professor Lyle Owen's article, "Communism and Our Colleges," in the Autumn, 1950, issue of the *A.A.U.P. Bulletin*. Owen is not one of those people who espouse Communism; he vehemently denies affiliation with it. Nevertheless, he advocates a policy which in the past has been responsible for numerous conversions to that doctrine.

He first defines two separate and distinct forms of Communism, the one totalitarian, the other "good" and he distinguishes between them by spelling the latter with a small c. He illustrates several varieties of it, all but disarming the reader with the notion that communism is really Christian. He makes a subtle appeal to Jews in recalling that "it is clear that in those times Jehovah was not opposed to communism, unlike these latter days, when, according to the great majority of His many vicars on earth, He is in the forefront of the fight against it."

In these sarcastic remarks he appears to be enmeshed in a confusion of definitions. For it is not the Christian doctrine of brotherly love which the ministry is fighting, but the Russian variety, all the good qualities of which are vitiated by their doctrine of hatred expressed in the Soviet handbook of pedagogy: "It is necessary to learn, not only to hate the enemy, but also to struggle with him, in time to unmask him, and finally, if he does not surrender, to destroy him."

After conceding that the totalitarians "of the Muscovite persuasion" are not to be trusted, he advocates inviting them into the classroom to present their views. He does not propose inviting one of the "Good, actually Christian" Communists, but Earl Browder. "Who will really be harmed?" he asks naively. The natural tendency to give people of opposing views an uncritical hearing has evidently blinded him to the fact that young people need tremendous moral and intellectual strength to choose wisely. And he does not mention the necessity of taking any precautions, such as first training the students to detect false logic.

No one has been mad enough to suggest that we deal with the mounting problem of crime by bringing criminals into the classroom to present the glamorous and lucrative side of crime without so much as a moral taboo to aid students in rejecting it.

To soothe the alarmists, Mr. Owen assures us that there are no more Communists on his campus "than you can count on the fingers of one amputated hand." Considering the months of expensive litigation required to prove the identity of even one Communist, it is a little difficult to see how he came by the exact information concerning "4000 faculty and students." Everybody is now willing to admit that there are Communists in government, labor unions, and in industry. He can we still go on pretending th they are not busily at work in o faculties and student bodies? A if we are willing to send our eigh teen-year-olds to fight them on t battlefield, is it not illogical, to s the least, to invite the enemy in indoctrinate them in the techniqu of surrender?

Mr. Owen does not think so.

He concludes with a parting sh for the Catholics, attempting shame them into a realization th since their own Saint Thomas Mo was a communist, Communi can't be so very bad.

MYRTLE PIHLMAN PO

On August 14, Charles N. D Bois died, in his forty-second ye He had recently been advanced an associate professorship of En lish at the University of Mas chusetts, and had been named rector of university extension. had long been a CEA member, a had been especially active in t NECEA. Serving on the local co mittee on arrangements when t NECEA met in May, 1949, at t University of Massachusetts, had often covered conference s sions for THE CEA CRITIC. had been instrumental in maki available to CEA members t Chap Book Supplement to the C CRITIC for May, 1951 — "T Responsibility of the Teacher Literature to the Humanities", his own former teacher, Dr. Re inald Cook, director of the Bre Loaf School. Among the acti pall bearers were the followi CEA members: Howard Munfor of Middlebury; and Elliot Alle H. Leland Varley, and Arthur W liams, of the University of Mas chusetts. In the words of Fra Prentice Rand, our society lo has "known what Charlie's he fulness could be." We keenly f his loss.

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